



Cooper's Talk

Newsletter of the Robert Cooper Audubon Society, serving East Central Indiana

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Feb 2018

Where do forest birds go after nesting?

A 3-year study on the breeding demography of post-fledging habitat use of mature forest birds in Southern Indiana

Wednesday, February 21, 7 p.m.

Patrick Ruhl will share some of his research findings on the habitat associations of mature forest bird species in southern Indiana. Many mature forest birds (Worm-eating Warbler, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Vireo and more) utilize different habitat types after the nesting stage of the breeding season, but the specific habitat associations of these species are largely unknown. A better understanding of habitat use for Indiana breeding birds throughout the entire duration of the breeding season will allow us to better conserve these species while they visit Indiana for the summer. Patrick has been researching breeding demography and postfledging ecology of mature forest birds in the Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood state forests since 2015. In this talk, he will share some recent results of his radio-tracking and bird-banding studies.

Patrick Ruhl is from West Lafayette, and has been studying avian ecology under the direction of Dr. Barny Dunning at Purdue University over the last four years. During his Ph.D. research, Patrick has worked on a variety of projects involving the breeding demography and habitat-use of Indiana birds. His research has focused mainly on the mature forest bird response to even-aged management, but in addition, he has also researched Worm-eating Warbler roosting and nesting habitat preference, and trophic associations of mature forest birds within the Indiana portion of the breeding range. In August 2018, Patrick will be headed to Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas to teach biostatistics and continue his Worm-eating Warbler research, studying migratory connectivity of Worm-eating Warblers that breed in the Ozark National Forest.



RCAS programs are held at the **Kennedy Branch** of the Muncie Public Library. Chapter business and refreshments start at 7:00 p.m. with the program beginning at 7:15 p.m.

Other Chapter News

Mounds State Park Bird Hike *Saturday, February 24, 9 a.m.*

Our monthly bird hike will be held on the last Saturday of February. Meet at the visitor center at 9 a.m. We will provide binoculars and a scope. The hike ends with a review of which species we recorded. Birders of all skill levels are invited and children are encouraged to join us!

Crash Course in Birding *February, 24 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. - Limberlost*

The hands-on workshop, from 2-5 p.m., is designed for both beginning bird watchers and general nature enthusiasts who want to learn more about birds in Indiana. Registration for RCAS and IAS members is only \$10. For non-members, registration is \$15. Registration is open, and space is limited to 20 people. More information can be found at www.cooperaudubon.org/other_news.html

Fox Grant Supports Student Research

Since its inception in 2016, the Fox Student Grant has supported two student researchers, both of whom sought to expand our understanding of Cerulean Warblers.

The [Cerulean Warbler](#) is a migratory songbird that is listed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as a “species of conservation concern” and listed as an endangered species in the State of Indiana. This beautiful wood warbler forages for insects high in the hardwood forest canopy of central and eastern United States, including mature white oaks in southeastern Indiana. The [National Audubon Society](#) reports “strongly declining numbers” due in part to “increasing cowbird parasitism.”

Clayton Delancey, the 2016 Fox Student Grant recipient, used radio transmitters to track the movements of fledgling Cerulean Warblers as they moved from their nests to shrubs and up through the tree canopy. These fledglings were difficult to capture because they did not usually come low enough in the canopy to catch. Areas with increased abundances of vegetation density, grapes, and ground cover were found to be key variables in identifying where fledgling Cerulean Warblers move to after leaving their nests. Interestingly, they were found in areas composed of fewer mature white oak stems, which is an important tree

species utilized by Cerulean Warblers during nesting.

In 2017, Garrett MacDonald was awarded funds that allowed him to purchase an automated recording unit, or ARU, which is a passive audio recording device that can be deployed in the environment for long periods of time. Garrett's project aims to assess patterns of geographic variation of Cerulean Warbler songs across the species' breeding range using archived song recordings as well as personal audio recordings of songs from a population in Indiana.

For the 2018 Fox Student Grant, Robert Cooper Audubon is now accepting proposals for bird-centered student research. The grant is made possible by a generous donation from Josie and Geoff Fox, long-time members of Robert Cooper Audubon and recipients of the 2017 Robert H. and Esther L. Cooper Conservation Award. The Fox Student Grant will provide an undergraduate or graduate degree-seeking student with up to \$1000 to purchase supplies and/or support for travel and field research expenses. The deadline for submission of proposals is March 26, 2018. Proposal guidelines are available at <http://www.cooperaudubon.org/index.html> or by contacting Annette Rose at rosenflowers@hughes.net

2017 RCAS Christmas Bird Count Results

On December 17, 2017, Robert Cooper Audubon Society (RCAS) hosted the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) within a 15-mile circle centered in Muncie.

During the RCAS December 17th count, fifteen individuals forming six teams plus an additional feeder counter reported a total of 56 species and 5,289 birds. As noted in Table 1, most common were the nonnative European Starlings which continue to out-compete native species. With only single sightings were a Northern Shoveler, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Special thanks to our CBC volunteers, including Kim McKenzie, Nona Nunnally, Catherine Pauls, Rose and Jim Jeffery Jim Schowe, Nick Boutis, Robert Williams, Sandy Ho, Barb Stedman, Martha Hunt, Susan Tomizawa, Larry Souder, Jim Flowers, and Annette Rose.

Species	Count	Species	Count
Sandhill Crane	cw	Carolina Wren	12
Black Vulture	cw	Lesser Scaup	13
Hairy Woodpecker	cw	Song Sparrow	13
Northern Shovler	1	Bufflehead	14
Bald Eagle	1	Great Blue Heron	15
Peregrine Falcon	1	Eastern Bluebird	15
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Hooded Merganser	16
American Black Duck x Mallard	2	Tufted Titmouse	20
Northern Pintail	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	23
Cooper's Hawk	2	House Finch	28
Pileated Woodpecker	2	Downy Woodpecker	29
Ruddy Duck	3	American Tree Sparrow	30
Belted Kingfisher	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	32
Brown Creeper	3	American Goldfinch	33
Common Grackle	3	Carolina Chickadee	39
Purple Finch	3	American Crow	51
Swan Sp	4	Cedar Waxwing	57
Common Loon	4	Horned Lark	60
Red-headed Woodpecker	5	Northern Cardinal	60
American Robin	5	Slate-colored Junco	72
Pine Siskin	6	Ring-billed Gull	75
Pied-billed Grebe	7	Mourning Dove	106
American Kestrel	7	Blue Jay	108
Gadwall	8	House Sparrow	351
Common Merganser	8	Mallard	420
Northern Flicker	9	Rock Pigeon	500
Eastern Meadowlark	9	Canada Goose	672
Red-Tailed Hawk	10	European Starling	2316



Robert Cooper
Audubon Society

P.O. Box 1635
Muncie, IN 47308

Dates for Your Calendar

**Feb 21: Where do birds go after nesting? -
Patrick Ruhl**

Feb 24: Mounds SP Bird Hike

Chapter Website: www.cooperaudubon.org
Find us on Facebook!
Email: admin@cooperaudubon.org

Program meetings are held every month except
July, August, and September at
Muncie Public Library, Kennedy Branch
1700 W McGalliard Rd, Muncie, IN
7:00 pm: chapter business & refreshments
7:15 pm: scheduled program

Cooper's Talk is published 5 times a year by the
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National Audubon Society serving Blackford,
Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, Madison, and
Randolph Counties.

Officers

Interim
President: Annette Rose 765-774-3134

Interim
Vice-President: Robert Williams 765-730-8427

Recording Sec.: Kim Lee 765-215-0576

Treasurer: Robert Williams 765-730-8427

Directors

2017-2019: Kamal Islam 765-284-9872

Kim McKenzie 707-535-6946

Committee Chairs

Conservation: Jon Creek 765-348-4019

Education: Kim Lee 765-215-0576

Field Trip: Rose Jeffery 765-716-0299

Hospitality: Doris Cheney 765-288-0891

Membership: Sandy Ho 765-215-4361

Program: Garrett MacDonald 509-979-5298

Newsletter Ed: Micayla Jones 765-635-1320